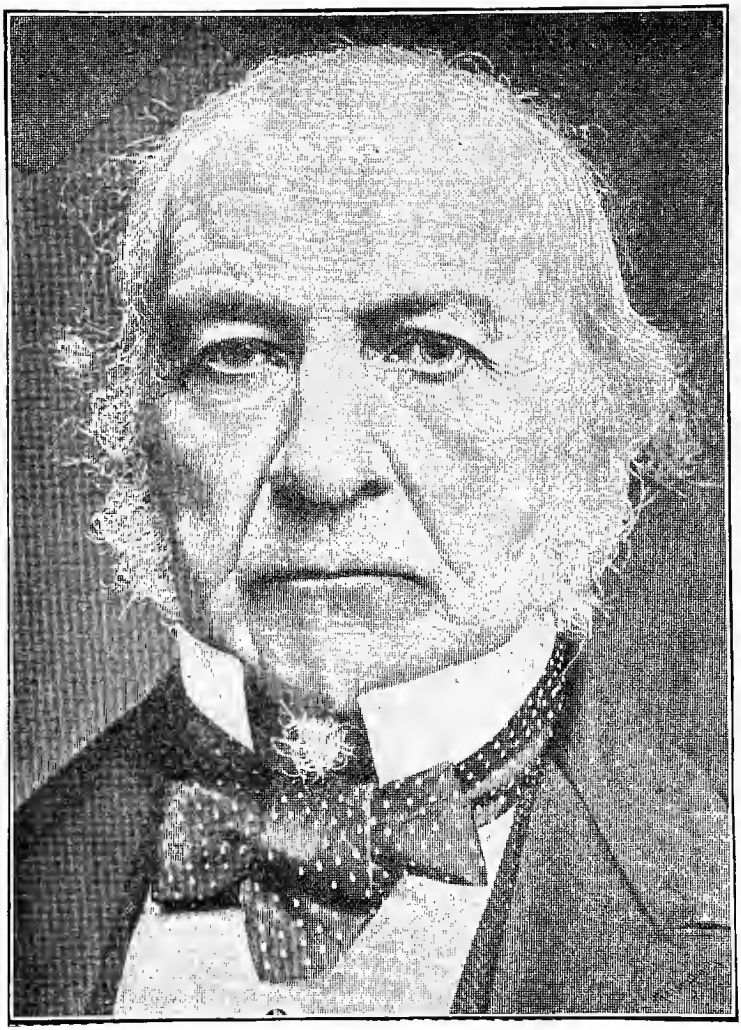

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CHANNEL TUNNEL.

Great Speech

BY THE

RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE, M.P.

IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

On JUNE 27th, 1888

(AS REVISED BY MR. GLADSTONE).

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1888

PREFACE

BY

The Hon. FRANCIS LAWLEY.

FIVE years ago I was honoured by an invitation to write a Preface to the Speech delivered in 1883 by Mr. Bright at Birmingham, in advocacy of the Channel Tunnel. This task, which—however incompetent to treat so vast and far-reaching a subject adequately—I have again accepted *con amore*—the task, that is to say, of writing a Preface to another Speech in favour of the Channel Tunnel, which Mr. Gladstone delivered last June in the House of Commons—seems to me far lighter than that upon which I embarked in 1883; and for this reason. The five years interposed between the speeches of Mr. Bright and Mr. Gladstone have served at least to show that the commercial advantages of uninterrupted railway communication between England and the Continent are better understood at present in this country than they were in 1883.

One brief quotation from "Whitaker's Almanack" for 1888 will suffice to illustrate my meaning. In that universally popular manual I find the following passage:—

"*Imports and Exports of Merchandise into and from the United Kingdom*, 1885-86.

"Perhaps no one cause in particular can be assigned for the continued depression of British commerce, but the falling off is so

great that there must be some cause for it. The amount is now becoming very serious, and is affecting all classes of the community. Compared with 1883 the difference is no less than £113,798,000—imports, £86,208,000; exports, £36,770,000—the loss being equal to £4 a head all round. . . The chief cause no doubt is foreign competition, direct by foreign merchants finding their way to our customers, and indirect by foreigners manufacturing goods for themselves, not unfrequently by means of British machinery, British coal, and even British workmen.

"Putting exports and imports together, the total foreign trade of the United Kingdom for the last two recorded years was:—

"Total Imports and Exports (1885).....	£642,371,649
"Total Imports and Exports (1886).....	£618,530,489
"A decrease in 1886 of	£23,841,160."

Writing upon the same subject in July, 1886, Mr. Owen Dalhousie Ross, C.E. (one of our ablest and most painstaking statisticians), says:—

"Since the abolition of the Corn Laws in 1846 the results contemporaneous with, and springing from, Free Trade require to be divided into two epochs: (1) those which refer to the twenty-eight years preceding 1872, and (2) those of the last fourteen years from 1872 to 1885. During the former period the value of the exports of British and Irish produce quadrupled in value, rising in 1872 to £256,000,000, or to the proportion of £8 1*s.* per head of our population, whereas during the latter period those exports have fallen back to £213,000,000 sterling in 1885, *i. e.*, to only £5 17*s.* 3*d.* per head of the population; a comparative decrease since the year 1872 in the value of our exports in proportion to the population of no less than 27 per cent. The falling off is chiefly in all the most important branches of our manufactures—cotton, woollen, and linen goods, iron and steel, haberdashery and millinery—and, but for the constantly-growing trade with India and the Colonies, the decrease would be even more remarkable; for the exports to *foreign countries* have fallen since 1872 from £196,000,000, or £6 3*s.* 2*d.* per head of our population, to £130,000,000, or £3 11*s.* 7*d.* per head in 1885, which shows a decrease of more than 40 per cent."

That the alarming decrease in British exports to foreign countries is directly attributable to the absence of railway intercourse between England and her nearest neighbour on the Continent, may be inferred from the following table:—

Comparison of the Imports and Exports at Liverpool and London in 1886 *with* 1877, *and at Antwerp in* 1885 *with* 1876, *showing the percentage of increase.*

	Tonnage of Ships at present.	Tonnage of Ships Ten Years ago.	Percentage of Increase.
	(1886)	(1877)	
Liverpool Imports	5,017,815	4,553,425	10·199
Do. Exports	4,714,654	4,487,782	5·055
London Imports	6,810,647	5,684,700	19·806
Do. Exports	5,215,984	4,421,873	17·959
	(1885)	(1876)	
Antwerp Imports	3,388,791	2,424,825	39·754
Do. Exports	3,367,844	2,377,658	41·645

The advance made by Havre, Hamburg and Bremen within the last dozen years is equally striking.

With these three brief statements of facts and figures let me conclude the least agreeable portion of my task. Englishmen are said to hate statistics, and it is not my purpose to inflict any more of them upon readers to whom they are generally unpalatable. The question, however, of the expediency or inexpediency of uniting England and France by a submarine tunnel involves a conflict of opinion between the commercial and the military authorities of the former. Speaking generally, every commercial authority of weight in this kingdom is agreed as to the loss inflicted on our trade by the absence of a

Tunnel between Dover and Calais; while, on the other hand, many of our most eminent military and naval authorities are opposed to it, as likely to expose the country to invasion.

It would be easy for me to follow the example of Mr. Gladstone, who showed in his recent speech the fallibility of military judgment, by quoting in the House of Commons the allegations of eminent soldiers who, in 1860, assured us that Lord Palmerston's fortifications, which cost about twelve millions sterling, would preserve us from all future scares; whereas we have had more poignant, startling and costly alarms within the last few years than were ever before excited in times of peace, and Lord Palmerston's fortifications are now regarded with shame and contempt.

"If," continued Mr. Gladstone, "I am asked to believe that military authorities are infallible, if I am required to surrender my poor judgment into their hands, I must quote the case of Alderney. If there is a creation on the face of the earth that is the creation of the military authorities, it is that which is now represented by the remnants and ruins and shreds and tatters of the works at Alderney. (Hear, hear.) There are persons who say that all faults and deficiencies that are committed by the military authorities are due to the impertinent interference of civilians. Well, I had to do with the works at Alderney in the sense of yielding to the imperative demand of the military authorities of that day, and excellent and very distinguished men they were—Sir John Burgoyne, Lord Hardinge, and others. The first demand was, I think, for £150,000. They told us that if we would spend £150,000 at Alderney, Cherbourg would be sealed up so that no French fleet could issue from it. I agreed, accordingly, that that sum should be voted; but the matter did not end there. The sums demanded increased, until they almost reached, I think, a total of £2,000,000; and now there remain only the miserable fragments of that work, more like a monument of human folly than of human sense or skill. Although useless to us, perhaps the works will not be absolutely useless to any enemies with whom we may at some future period have to deal. They may possibly extract some small

portion of shelter and accommodation from those ruins." (Laughter, and hear, hear.) (*a*).

Or, again, I might follow Sir Edward Watkin's example, and answer military objections to the Channel Tunnel by arraying one soldier against another, as there are many soldiers among us who openly dissent from, and even ridicule, the opinions of the Duke of Cambridge, Lord Wolseley, Sir Edward Hamley, Sir Lintorn Simmons, and others. For my present purpose, however, I will assume that commercial men in this country are all but unanimous in favour of a Channel Tunnel, and that a vast majority of our soldiers are against it. The final decision, then, at which sooner or later—and it will not be long delayed—the country will have to arrive must rest with the people of England, to whom Mr. Bright appealed in 1883 and Mr. Gladstone in June last. In order to assist their judgment, let me endeavour to show what military authority is worth, and how far it owes its paramount influence to the support of civilian journalists, writing for the most part from instructions given them by other civilians, who are

(*a*) The following letter appeared in "The Field" of July 28, 1888:—

"The Dangers of Alderney Harbour.

"Sir,—You will be doing my brother yachtsmen good service by warning them against entering this harbour without special precautions as to the dangers from the broken down breakwater. There is absolutely nothing to guide you as to the point where the stones end. A buoy has been placed in former years, I know, but it has disappeared for some unaccountable reason.

"I came in last night, after a sharp run from Cherbourg, and had it not been for the shouting of the men on the breakwater should have been wrecked. Fortunately my captain just had time to put the helm hard a starboard, and we only grazed. But 3 ft. off the false keel and sundry copper plates ripped off, will compel an immediate return to Cowes to repair the damage.

"Orelia, off Alderney, *July* 25. "Edwd. B. Forbes."

ignorant that the landing of a great force of armed men, with artillery, horses, ammunition, and provisions, on a hostile coast (which with or without a tunnel would, as Colonel Hozier shows, still be necessary) is without any exception the most difficult, the slowest, and the most dangerous operation of war; who have never seen a campaign, a battle, or even a skirmish; and who are always prone to believe that panics, and a lively credulity and alacrity in entertaining them, are the surest evidences of patriotism and intelligence.

Let me begin with the opinion of the Duke of Wellington, who in his declining years was the greatest alarmist that this country ever produced, and who proclaimed in the House of Lords that if 12,000 fully-equipped French soldiers were landed in England he saw nothing to prevent their marching on and taking London! About the "Iron Duke," when in his prime, no Englishman, from the highest to the lowest, would ever say a disparaging word. But it is an incontrovertible proof of the slight weight attributed to the Duke's senile alarms that neither Lord Wolseley, nor any of those who believe in the possibility of invasion, with or without a Channel Tunnel, has ever thought it worth while to reproduce, and to scatter broadcast through the land, the Duke's "Letter upon our National Defences," written five years before its author's death, and thirty-two years after his last experience of active hostilities.

> "In Life's last stage, what prodigies arise!
> Fears of the brave, and follies of the wise."

Who would believe that the following words came from the hand which "curbed the might of Bonaparte,

rolled the thunders of Assaye"—from the hand of England's greatest soldier? "I am bordering," he wrote, in 1847, "on seventy-seven years of age, passed in honour. I repeat, then, that there is not a spot on our southern coast, unless it be immediately under the guns of Dover, upon which infantry might not be thrown ashore at any time of tide, with any wind, and in any weather."

To criticise this obviously extravagant statement would be an insult to the understanding of Englishmen. There are miles upon miles of our southern coast upon which no row-boat could land under any circumstances. Mr. Cobden pointed out, in his "Three Panics," published in 1862, that if anybody but the Duke of Wellington had stated that there was any shore in the world on which a body of troops could be thrown "at any time of the tide, with any wind, or in any weather," he would have been deemed a madman. Coming from the great Duke, the assertion was unchallenged; his entire letter was quoted as an unanswerable proof that the country was in danger. "To have ventured," added Mr. Cobden, "on criticism or doubt would only have invited the accusation of want of patriotism." Even these "fears of the brave" could not, however, induce the Duke to regard the ground lying under the guns of Dover as liable to be occupied by an enemy; and what is there to prevent the hole in which the English end of the Channel Tunnel debouches—a space about as big as the bear-pit in the Zoological Gardens—from being commanded by Dover Castle and Dover Breakwater? If it is argued—as it has been by the Duke of Cambridge and Lord Wolseley—that,

assisted by treachery, an enemy might seize Dover Castle, would it not be equally easy to seize it whether there was or was not a Channel Tunnel? If it comes to treachery, do we not stand in jeopardy every hour? For months and months prior to the assassination of William the Silent at Delft, in 1584, Balthasar Gerard plotted to get into the domestic service of his victim. No life in this or any other country is safe against a crafty and resolute assassin; and there is no command, and no place of trust, civil or military, which may not fall into the hands of a traitor. It is absolutely inconceivable, however, that the entire garrison of Dover Castle, or of any other military fortress, should be traitors, or that under any circumstances the traitors should bear more than an infinitesimal proportion to the honest officers and privates of the garrison. To oppose such a great and beneficent work as the Channel Tunnel on such flimsy grounds is an insult offered to the British Army, which the Duke of Cambridge has commanded for two and thirty years without ever coming across such an instance of treachery. In the long and splendid annals of that Army, there is, happily, no case of desertion which, as regards all the worst elements of treachery and ingratitude, can compare with that of General Bourmont, who commanded the leading division of Napoleon's *grande armée* in 1815, and went over to the enemy three days before the Battle of Waterloo.

Far be it from me to speak disrespectfully of soldiers, with whom I have passed many of the happiest years of my life, and in whose company I have, as a special correspondent, witnessed every possible operation of

war, including battles, skirmishes, sieges, marches, retreats, surprises, ambushes, passages of rivers, blockade-running, and attempts to land men on a hostile coast. In the practical management of soldiers in action and upon parade, a drill-sergeant undoubtedly knows more than any civilian that ever lived. When, however, we recede from these professional details, and contemplate the strategy of a General, and the resources at his command, it cannot be doubted that there are civilians—among whom I may mention the late Dr. Thomas Arnold, Head Master of Rugby School—who are as well able to grasp military subjects and problems as any soldier in existence. Neither Jomini, nor Matthieu Dumas, nor Hamley, understood the principles of war, and the moral, political, and material influences which affect its general conduct, better than Dr. Arnold, or the still living Mr. George Hooper, whose "Italian Campaigns of General Bonaparte in 1796-97," published in 1859, together with his "Waterloo: A History of the Campaign of 1815," published in 1862, are unsurpassed in scientific grasp by the writings of any soldier. "I would advise you," said Mr. Bright, in 1883, "never to take the opinion of high military authorities, except on the question of what should be done when you are actually at war." Need I remind the Duke of Cambridge that if his visionary fears had commanded general attention in 1851, the Great Exhibition would never have taken place? Last month Sir Edward Watkin read a letter in the House of Commons expressing astonishment that the English Cabinet did not insist upon the Queen retiring to Osborne, in 1851, because 3,000 men

of the French National Guard were permitted to parade the streets of London in uniform, and wearing their side arms! At this moment there is in existence a still wilder letter (I have myself seen it), which if published would cover its still living writer with more confusion and ridicule than he would care to face. There are, added Sir Edward Watkin, thirty safe modes of closing or flooding the Channel Tunnel, against the employment of any one of which it is an idle bugbear to whisper the single word—treachery. Who that has ever read Erckmann-Chatrian's story of "Waterloo" can have forgotten the graphic description of the hurried retreat of the French to Charleroi?

"In spite of the fatigue, which almost broke us down," exclaims Joseph, "Buche and I started again to the left, whilst on the right, behind us, in the direction of Charleroi, the cries and shots redoubled, and all along the road we saw nothing but men fighting. About one in the afternoon we repassed the Sambre by the Châtelet Bridge, and arrived about three o'clock at a little village. We must have been an ill-looking pair, especially Buche, with his bandaged head, and his beard of a week's growth, thick and rough as the bristles of a wild boar. We stopped at a forge, and the blacksmith, a tall, dark man, told us to go into the tavern opposite, where he would give us a jug of beer. When we had sat down, the room was so full of people, who came to hear the news, that we could scarcely breathe. They asked us, when we had come to an end of eating and drinking, if it were true that the French had lost a great battle. I was ashamed to confess our disaster, but Buche exclaimed, 'We have been betrayed. Traitors gave up our plans. The army was full of traitors, who cried, "*Sauve qui peut!*" How could you expect us not to be beaten?' This was the first time I had heard treason spoken of; it is true some of the wounded had cried, 'We are betrayed!' but I had not taken any notice of their words; and when Buche got us out of the difficulty in this way, I was at once pleased and surprised.

"These good people then joined with us in indignation against the traitors. Buche said the Prussians had arrived through the treason of Marshal Grouchy. This did appear to me a little strong; but when

the peasants, filled with emotion, made us drink more beer and gave us tobacco, I ended by saying the same as Buche. It was not till afterwards when we had left the place that the idea of our abominable falsehoods made me ashamed of myself, and I exclaimed,—'Do you know, Buche, these lies of ours about traitors are contemptible things? If every one says the same sort of thing, in the end we shall all be traitors, and the Emperor the only honest man! It's a shame to our country to say we have so many traitors amongst us—and it's not true!'

"'Bah! bah!' said he, 'we were betrayed; but for that the English and Prussians could never have forced us to fly!'"

Are not the imaginary excuses for their defeat put forth by Buche and Joseph—excuses which, in 1815, were on every French tongue—akin to Lord Wolseley's suggestion that, if the Channel Tunnel be made, ninety-nine English soldiers out of every hundred will advise their friends to invest in American securities rather than in those of a country so liable to invasion as England would then be?

As regards the United States, Lord Wolseley cannot be unaware that there is probably not a single American officer who took part on either side in his country's great Civil War, between 1861 and 1865, but scouts the idea that a hole in the ground—an exaggerated rat-hole—can by any possibility be a danger to this country, which is defended by eight millions of adult men of the same race as George Washington, Andrew Jackson, Winfield Scott, Admirals Hull, Farragut and Porter, Stonewall Jackson, W. T. Sherman, U. S. Grant and Robert E. Lee. Lord Wolseley may imagine that the counsel of American soldiers, among whom are some of the ablest military engineers in the world, is not always benevolent to this country. A pretty large experience of American officers,

naval and military, has, however, taught me that there is not one of them but would give his judgment on such a subject from purely professional grounds, and that those of them likely to be animated by ill-will towards the home of their ancestors are few indeed. Turning to Germany, we know that Field Marshal Von Moltke, the ablest book-soldier and strategist in existence, holds that to attempt to attack England through a tunnel would be tantamount to invading her through his library door. Colonel H. M. Hozier, again, who knows German military men as well as any English soldier alive, says that to them arguments against the Channel Tunnel appear to spring from a disordered imagination. Colonel Hozier is quite unanswerable when he says:—

"Our military authorities seem to have been placed in a most unfair position. It was the duty of the Government of the country to decide whether, for commercial reasons, a Channel Tunnel should be permitted or not. If a Channel Tunnel is a commercial necessity, the military and naval authorities should be told to find the means for defending it; and we may be perfectly certain that in that case they will find the means to do so. To ask the military authorities, 'Is it an advantage in a military sense or not?' only places them in a position of being obliged, out of caution, to object to it; but if the military authorities are told that, for commercial reasons, the Tunnel must be formed, they will easily find means to defend it."

Moreover, Lord Wolseley greatly deceives himself when he imagines that out of every hundred English officers ninety-nine are opposed to the Channel Tunnel. If he will take the trouble to ascertain the genuine opinions of Royal Artillery and Royal Engineer officers—irrespective of their impressions that it is fashionable to denounce the Channel Tunnel, and might injure them professionally were they not to do so—he will have his eyes opened in a way that he little expects. It was an

artillery officer who said recently that objectors to the Tunnel resemble a timorous householder, who imagines his home to be open to a burglar's attack because a gimlet hole is driven through his front door.

Lord Wolseley, who will not hear of a tunnel from England to France, cheerfully promises his aid and encouragement to those who would make a tunnel from Scotland to Ireland. It is not likely that he will be taken at his word; for, despite its ineffable political advantages, a tunnel from Port Patrick, in Wigtonshire, to Donaghadee, in County Down, would never pay, unless in connection with a Channel Tunnel. The distance is only twenty-two miles, but it would cost three or four times as much as the Channel Tunnel, for which Nature seems to have specially provided by laying down a stratum of grey chalk, or chalk and clay mixed, which is impervious to water and as easily scooped out as a Stilton cheese. Scotland and Ireland, on the other hand, are divided at the bottom of the sea by the hardest trap rock, composed of felspar and hornblende, which it would puzzle Captain Beaumont to pierce, and which blunts the chisels of a boring machine after a few strokes. In addition, there is in the middle of the sea a huge cliff, or chasm of unknown depth, which would either have to be filled with concrete, assuming the depth not to be too great, or bridged by an iron tube similar to that which crosses the Menai Straits. If, however, the Irish Tunnel should be built before that from Dover to Calais is undertaken, Lord Wolseley would have cause to regret his advocacy of the former, as it would inevitably lead to the construction of the latter.

There is no passenger and goods traffic reaching England which can compare in wealth and importance with that coming from the United States. It was but the other day that the Umbria brought 600 first-class passengers from New York to Liverpool, and the City of New York, the latest addition to the Inman Line, is constructed to carry 850 first and second-class passengers. The ships of the Inman and International Line are said to have been built chiefly by American money, contributed by Philadelphia. Some years since, certain dry goods firms in Philadelphia complained that their imports were delayed at the New York Custom House, and formed a company to build or buy some American steamers, which were put on the line between Liverpool and Philadelphia. The Philadelphia Central Railroad guaranteed interest on the bonds of the Steamship Company, and had to pay it. After working for some years, several ships of the Liverpool and Philadelphia S. S. Company were lost or condemned, and it became necessary to charter English steamers to fill the gap. Some two or three years since a statement of its affairs appeared in print, showing that while the American steamers did not pay their working expenses, the English steamers paid 10 per cent. By this time the Philadelphia Central Railroad was heavily committed, and Mr. Peter Wright resolved "to make a spoon or spoil a horn," by suggesting that it should increase its responsibility by guaranteeing interest upon some of the capital spent in building the City of New York and the City of Paris in England—the two largest passenger ships ever turned out since the

Great Eastern. The City of New York sailed from Liverpool to New York on August 1, and the City of Paris will be ready in a few months. This circumstance shows the anxiety of the Americans to compete with England on the Atlantic, although their best ships are at present of English make, and sail under the English flag. The day, however, is near at hand when citizens of the United States will be permitted to buy as many English ships as they like, and to sail them under the American flag, as the legislation which now forbids them to do so will shortly be abrogated. Nor will it be long before the Americans are able to build iron passenger steamers in their own country, capable of competing with the finest and largest vessels of the Cunard, the White Star, the Guion and the North German Lines. In the opinion of those who are best qualified to judge, the Atlantic passenger trade is still in its infancy; and England will lose most of it, if she is so insane as to listen to the alarmists who forbid her to make a Channel Tunnel. Already a far greater proportion of the letters despatched from New York to England and Europe come by the North German than by any English Line. Concessions and privileges are now given by Americans to German, and withheld from English, lines, for the simple reason that Berlin is a better market for American securities and enterprises than London, which has ceased to be the great financial centre of the world. Our manufactures are being transferred from England to settle in Belgium, France and Germany, and our financial business is following them. It is poor consolation to reflect that while England

is being ruined, the Duke of Cambridge, Lord Wolseley, and a few other soldiers, who always disclaim any desire to be regarded as statesmen, are fiddling over her ruins.

Now, if there were tunnels from Ireland and Scotland, and from Dover to Calais, can it be doubted for a moment that every American passenger coming from the New to the Old World would land in Ireland? The voyage from Sandy Hook to the west coast of Ireland will soon be accomplished in five days; and no one who knows the Americans, of all classes, will doubt that they would all elect to land at the nearest European port connected with England and the Continent by railway. "The shop-keeping nation," says Emerson, in his "English Traits," "has, to use a shop-word, a good stand. England is anchored on the flank of Europe, right in the heart of the modern world. As America, Asia and Europe lie, these Britons have precisely the best commercial position in the whole planet."

These words were written in 1848, when railways and steamboats were still in their infancy. The lapse of forty years has covered the Continent with railways, and built up great ports at Antwerp, Hamburg, Bremen and Havre, to which lines of magnificent steamers now run without paying tribute to England. Nevertheless, she has still "the best commercial position in the whole planet," if she would consent to make use of it. "Our country," says Colonel Hozier, "is the landing-stage of the great traffic between America on the one side, and the continent of Europe on the other—between South Africa on the one side and Europe on the other—and also for the vast trade which comes from Australasia and the

far East." All these branches of enriching commerce are threatened by our want of railway communication with the Continent. Twenty-five miles of submarine tunnel from England to France would restore this nation to her ancient commercial supremacy; and would lead *ex necessitate* to another tunnel from Scotland to Ireland, which would yield ample dividends if American trade and passengers flowed through it, and would for ever settle the Irish question. The increase in our wealth and comfort would be untold, and Ireland would be a sharer in both. All these advantages are obvious to the meanest understanding, and are insusceptible of contradiction. Against them are to be set the craven fears of a few soldiers and the sentimentalism of a few journalists. I am acquainted with one of the latter—a man whom to know is to love, and for whom one line of Shakespeare,

"This precious stone set in a silver sea,"

outweighs all material considerations and arguments.

Sir Michael Hicks-Beach admits that, for want of better communication with the Continent, we are losing the depôt trade of the world. "I will tell you," he continued, "how to retain that trade by a better and cheaper mode. It is so to improve your harbours as to make them better and more accessible to large ships than the harbours of your Continental rivals, and in doing so you would have the additional advantage of benefiting your mercantile marine." Can any sane man deny that Sir Michael Hicks-Beach's proposal was pulverised by Mr. Gladstone's reply to his suggestion?

Mr. Gladstone said, "The Right Honourable Baronet objects to a Channel Tunnel, but proposes that the harbours of this country should be enlarged. He has no apprehension on this subject. Well, my apprehension is not great; but, if I am to conjure up any prospect of danger, I tell the Right Honourable Baronet deliberately that his plan of easily accessible harbours, and great ships, and of making the Channel a high road to be crossed with wonderful rapidity, presents ten times the danger that the prospects of a tunnel could possibly awaken in the most excitable mind." All the bugbears of our predecessors, who kept on prating "Steam has bridged the Channel!" have lost their terrors for Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, who can see nothing but objections to localising invasion, so that its dangers shall be confined to watching a hole twenty feet broad, in the event of our again being at war with France.

Let it not be forgotten that, in the event of a war between England and any other power than France, a Channel Tunnel would emancipate this country from the most formidable peril to which protracted hostilities could possibly expose her. Of all that English men, women and children eat and drink, a vast and rapidly increasing proportion comes from foreign countries; to say nothing about raw material, upon which the very life of our manufactures depends. Assuming that we were at war with Russia, can it be doubted that some of our American brethren, "a little more than kin, and less than kind," would avenge such "Anglo-rebel pirates" as the Alabama, by fitting out privateers to sail under the Russian flag? American ships of high speed, and with

formidable batteries, would be sold to Russia, and American officers would enter her service, as Paul Jones did, after the cessation of the Revolutionary War which ended in the establishment of American independence. If, on the other hand, a Channel Tunnel were in existence, all danger of starvation, or even of short commons, would be averted from this country were she at peace with France. I do not envy the feelings of those English soldiers who have terrified their countrymen into forbidding the construction of a Channel Tunnel, if we are soon engaged in a long-protracted war with a strong maritime Power other than France, and are forced by starvation, or the dread of it, to come to terms with an enemy whom, with a Channel Tunnel, we might defy for years.

Who, then, are the true enemies of their country? On the one hand we have men who tell us that the danger of our being invaded, in case of war with France, through a hole—which even Lord Wolseley admits could be held by fifty forewarned soldiers against a world in arms—is intolerable; and on the other, we have a host of commercial authorities and Chambers of Commerce proclaiming that, without a Channel Tunnel, the volume of our trade will dwindle and decline more and more, until our manufacturers are compelled to slip away one by one, and establish themselves in Germany, or Belgium, or France, or Italy, or Japan, or in North or South America. With France we have had no war for nearly three-quarters of a century; and, thanks to her fears of Germany, which are not likely to be soon removed, she has entered into heavy recognizances to keep the peace

with us. The pacifying and harmonising influences of increased intercourse between England and France are so obvious that it is unnecessary to waste a word upon them.

Sir Walter Scott tells us, in his "Life of Dean Swift," that in the Dean's lunacy he had some lucid intervals, on which occasions his physicians and guardians took him out for the air. On one of these days Swift remarked a new building near Dublin, and asked what it was designed for. "That, Mr. Dean," answered Dr. Kingsbury, "is a magazine for arms and powder, built for the security of the city." The Dean made no reply, but on returning home wrote down the following lines—the last that he ever produced :—

> " Behold! a proof of Irish sense ;
> Here Irish wit is seen ;
> When nothing's left that's worth defence,
> We build a magazine."

The opponents of the Channel Tunnel are doing all that they can to reduce these islands to a condition " When nothing's left that's worth defence." Who, then, I ask again, are their country's chief enemies? It is for the people of England to answer; and with them, and fortunately with them alone, the ultimate decision will lie.

Speech of

The Right Hon. W. E. GLADSTONE, M.P.

The appeal which has been made to me by the right hon. gentleman is a very fair appeal. He has a right to know, and I will endeavour to explain to him, why, having been at the head of the Government in 1884, and having voted against proceeding with the Channel Tunnel Bill, I do not take the same course on the present occasion. The right hon. gentleman has spoken for the Government to which he belongs, and so far he is in the same position as was my right hon. friend the member for West Birmingham when he asked the House to put a negative upon the Bill. But the right hon. gentleman will at once perceive the broad and vital difference between the speech which he has now made in stating the grounds for his proceeding and the speech which was then made by my right hon. friend. The right hon. gentleman has opposed the Channel Tunnel Bill, I am sorry to say, upon its merits, upon grounds which will be as good in any future year as they are at the present moment. (Ministerial cheers.) My right hon. friend the member for West Birmingham is not in the House, but I have had within the last week or ten days an opportunity through his kindness of going over the whole ground and testing our several recollections, and I believe I am correct in saying that in the speech of my right hon. friend there was not one word of objection to the Channel Tunnel upon its

merits, and that his opposition was an opposition of time, and of time only. (Hear, hear.) For my part, I could not have taken then any other position, and I will presently state why it was that I was a party to opposition on that ground. It is indeed nothing less than a matter of justice to the hon. member for Hythe and the promoters of the Channel Tunnel, after what happened in 1884 and 1885—I believe these were the years—that I should explain the view which I took of their case and the reasons which induced me at that period, without any doubt or hesitation, to join in the opposition to the progress of the Bill.

I am very glad, Sir, to feel assured, after the debate of last night, that we are now engaged in a discussion of a very different kind. I do not think that any person who agrees with me will vote against the Government from any desire to displace it, or that any gentleman who will vote with the Government will do so upon the ground that this is one of the sacrifices required from them to protect the country against the danger of a Liberal invasion of the benches opposite. (Laughter.) So far, the debate has favourable characteristics. But there is also something in it which inspires a feeling of despair. I am afraid the arguments in this matter on the one side and on the other are looked upon by those who do not accept them, not only as unsatisfactory, but as something worse. On political questions we always feel that at any rate there is something in what the other man says, but on this occasion we seem to get at certain ultimate principles and modes of thinking which are fixed on one side and on the other. The right hon. gentleman has stated his case with great clearness and ability, and yet I frankly own—and frankness is a great virtue—the whole of the consideration he has advanced and his arguments against this tunnel are (I hope he will pardon me for the phrase I am about to use) neither better nor worse than mere and sheer bugbears. (Cheers.)

And now, Sir, having done homage to the virtue of frankness, I will endeavour to fall back upon the virtue of courtesy. I will relate to the House the manner of my first acquaintance with this subject. It was placed before me by a deputation which had a Tory

Chancellor of the Exchequer at its head. Not that he bore that title at the time, for I was myself then, in 1865, Chancellor of the Exchequer under Lord Palmerston. But he succeeded me in that office. He was a gentleman whose name has always been mentioned with respect in this House—I mean Mr. Ward Hunt. (Hear, hear.) He came to me as the leader of a deputation and endeavoured to induce—or perhaps I should say seduce—me (laughter) to support the promotion of this (we are told) dangerous project. Mr. Ward Hunt was totally unaware of all those dangers which have been opened up by the right hon. gentleman. But here I am obliged to correct a statement of my hon. friend the member for Hythe, who stated that I alone among the ministers of that day was disposed to give a guarantee in some shape or other to the promoters of the project. I never was disposed to give a guarantee to the extent of a single farthing to the promoters of this scheme or any other scheme of a similar kind. (Hear, hear.) On the contrary, Sir, I was instructed on behalf of the Government, and with my own full concurrence, to refuse a guarantee. But we did so without giving the slightest indication of any opposition on the merits to the Tunnel scheme. A series of other Governments followed; and every one of those Governments officially committed itself on the merits of the Tunnel. Lord Granville on the part of the Government of 1868, Lord Derby on the part of the Government of 1874, and, I think, the senior Lord Derby, the distinguished Prime Minister of a former period, expressed precisely similar sentiments; and every one of those Governments acting unanimously was engaged so far in the promotion of this project that they gave it their unequivocal sanction. (Hear, hear.)

Nor did they stop there, but they entered upon international proceedings. Communications were established with France. A joint commission was appointed on the part of the two countries, and I do wish to bring home to the minds of hon. and right hon. gentlemen the degree to which our honour and our dignity in an international aspect are involved in the question before the House.

I must say that that is one of the most serious considerations that operate on my mind with regard to the promotion or rejection of this Bill. (Hear, hear.) The two Governments instituted a commission to consider the details of the schemes by means of which this great project could be best advanced. The principle of the project was taken for granted on the one side and on the other, when we entered into these formal proceedings in unison with the French Government. The commission laid down conditions which were to be the basis of a treaty between the two countries, and the actual signature of the treaty was suspended, not upon the ground of any political apprehension whatever, but simply, I believe, upon the ground that financial considerations did not at that moment favour the progress of the scheme. Now, Sir, what presses rather disagreeably upon my mind is this—that there was perhaps something of the character of an engagement of honour in these proceedings between England and France, and that it is a matter of some difficulty to justify the recession of a kingdom such as this from a position of that kind, after we had voluntarily and deliberately made it the subject of such international proceedings.

The right hon. gentleman says there are serious objections raised by the military authorities against the scheme. Well, Sir, at the time I am speaking of, the opinion of the military authorities consulted by the War Department was in favour of the Tunnel. (Hear, hear.) The two Governments did not act in respect of the Tunnel without consulting military authorities, and those military authorities whom the Government did consult were distinctly favourable to the Tunnel. (Hear, hear.) But I think I may go a little further than that and may venture to read, at least for the purpose of challenging contradiction, a short extract from a very well-informed memorandum with which I have been supplied on the part of the promoters of the measure. The extract to which I refer says, "It was not until the autumn of 1881 that any military opinion adverse to the Tunnel was expressed." (Hear, hear.)

Now, Sir, that is a remarkable fact. The Tunnel was then a scheme twenty years old. It had been discussed in every possible form. It had been the subject of much official correspondence, and it had received the assent of a series of administrations. Those Governments did not assent without the authority of the military department and the advice of its military advisers, and until the year 1881 these portentous discoveries, which have taken possession of the mind and imagination of the right hon. gentleman, and of those who sit near him, were never heard of. (Cheers.) Surely that is rather a staggering statement. By 1881, however, we find that the military authorities had commenced their operations, and a great ferment began to prevail. A combination of powers was brought into operation. The literary authorities were brought to back up the military authorities. Great poets evoked the muses (laughter) and strove, not as great poets in other times used to do, to embolden their countrymen to encounter dangers that existed, but to intimidate their countrymen by conjuring up phantoms of danger that did not exist. (Laughter and Cheers.) The military host and the literary host were backed by the opinion of what is called "society," and society is always ready for the enjoyment of the luxury of a good panic ("hear, hear" and laughter) when that panic is based on the contemplation of a latent contingency which is not in the slightest degree likely to arrive. (Laughter.) These panics in the air have an attraction for certain classes of minds that is indescribable, and these classes of minds, I am bound to admit, are very largely to be found among what are termed the educated portion of society. But the terrors which have been evoked in connection with this plan never touched the mind of the nation. Such terrors very seldom find access to the mind of the nation. But they took hold of certain classes, and it had required twenty years even for these classes to discover them. They were represented by what is called the public opinion of the day—that is to say, public opinion manufactured in London (hear, hear) by great

editors and clubs who are at all times formidable and a great power for the purposes of the moment, but who are a greater power and become overwhelming in their strength when they are backed by the threefold forces of the military and literary authorities and the social circles of London. (Hear, hear.)

These powers among them created at that period such a panic that even those of us who were most favourable to the Tunnel thought it quite vain to offer a direct opposition to the torrent. We therefore proposed the appointment of a joint committee, and the issue of that proceeding has been very fairly stated by the right hon. gentleman.

I am bound to make a fair admission—that, although in the Government of 1868 there never was a question as to the propriety of the Tunnel, and Lord Granville even instituted communications with France, yet when we come to the Government of 1880 and the circumstances of 1881, 1882, and 1883, a change of opinion did find its way even into the Cabinet. Some of us were not what I should call quite sound. If I am asked why under these circumstances I took part in throwing out the Channel Tunnel Bill my answer is to be supplied by reverting to the general situation of affairs at the period. We, the Government, were engaged in arduous undertakings. Powers were put into action against us at that time within the walls of this House which are now happily in abeyance. We deemed that it was our duty to have some regard to the time of Parliament. We knew it was impossible to pass the Bill. It was a time of tempest, and as during a tempest a prudent man often finds it well not to trust to his frail umbrella, but to take shelter in some substantial building, so we deemed it to be best for all parties to seek at the moment a covert from the storm. (Laughter.) At all events we thought it idle to persevere in a hopeless struggle. We did not in the least enter into its merits. We did not think there was the slightest chance of proceeding with the Bill to the end, and we, therefore, deemed the discussion perfectly useless. That was the principle on which we proceeded.

I will now say a little upon the arguments of the right hon. gentleman, but I am not going to attempt to follow those arguments as if we were engaged in a debate like that of last night. I do not think it desirable to make this discussion resemble a set debate between both sides of the House. There are some on this side of the House who are probably unsound. (A laugh.) I do not now refer to the general unsoundness which we find to prevail with some who were once our friends, but to unsoundness on this particular question. On the other hand, I hope there are some on that side who are sound on such an argument as this. But there was one observation which fell from the right hon. gentleman which I regret. It was his comparison between the internal condition of France at the present time and the internal condition of France some six or seven years ago. I think it was an error to enter upon that chapter of the subject, even if the right hon. gentleman really entertains the opinion which he apparently does entertain. But as he has said that he thinks there is not the same prospect of stability in France now as then, I must give myself the satisfaction so far of expressing a rather different opinion. (Cheers.) And I may remind the Government and the House of this fact, that the French Republic never, since 1870, has been called upon to pass through so severe a crisis as the crisis—not yet, I think, twelve months old—with respect to the appointment of President. That was the most trying experience which it has had to go through, and the approach of the crisis made many of its friends and well-wishers tremble. (Hear, hear.) It made every sound and right-minded man in France apprehensive; but I rejoice to say that France, and the institutions of France, came through the struggle with a calm tranquillity and solidity, which could not have been exceeded in any country in the world. (Cheers.) That is the one thing I would say in answer to the right hon. gentleman.

I do not touch on the engineering question. Neither will I touch upon the commercial question, except to say frankly that

I believe the commercial advantages to be enormous. I have nothing, however, to do with engineering or commercial questions. Neither do I touch the finance of the scheme. That is no affair of mine. I am here simply as a member of Parliament to see whether there is any reason why I should withhold my assent to the plan. I have used a familiar term as to sheltering from the storm. After hearing the speech of the right hon. gentleman I am not quite sure whether the storm is still going on, but I have recently been under the impression that the panic had passed away. My impression was that the literary alarm, the social alarm, which backed up the military alarm, was at an end, and that there was now a chance of a fair, temperate, and candid discussion. The right hon. gentleman refers us to a land frontier as if that were an unmixed evil. No doubt it is less secure upon the whole than a sea frontier, but he must not forget that a land frontier has enormous advantages with respect to intercourse between man and man, which are of great consequence in the view of those who believe that peace and not war is the natural and proper condition of mankind, and is to be to a great extent for this country, at least, the ordinary, normal, and habitual condition in which we live relatively to foreign countries. But on the question of procuring a land frontier, if it is a land frontier, which I do not think it is, the advantages of a land frontier in peace are enormous compared with its disadvantages and dangers; and the effect of this plan, I believe, would be, without altering in any way our insular character, or insular security, to give us some of the innocent and pacific advantages of a land frontier.

With regard to the political and military objections, I must say I feel pained, as an Englishman, in considering the extensive revolution of opinion that has taken place within the past twenty years on this question. (Hear, hear.) There were then doubts as to the financial success of the Tunnel—but on that matter I do not enter—but there was no doubt cast upon it as to the question of our security. Now, Sir, a sharp transition has taken place. A

transition from darkness to light is often inconvenient, yet it is good. The question is, whether our transition has been from light to darkness; and it is rather a serious question for us to consider whether the English nation and Government from 1860 to 1880, or whether the influences which acted during the years 1883-4 and 1885, and which are to some extent acting now, lead us in the right or the wrong direction. Speaking of the dangers of a land frontier, the right hon. gentleman said that this end of the Tunnel must always be the subject of great anxiety. Well, if this end of the Tunnel is to be the subject of great anxiety, what will the other end be? (Cheers.) But, strange to say, I find that the other end of the Tunnel is the subject of no anxiety at all. (Laughter and cheers.) Many persons consider the French nation as rather light-minded; as a people with great resources and great ingenuity, but still light-minded; unlike ourselves—solid, consistent, perhaps rather heavy, but at any rate a very steady-going people, who make up our minds slowly and resolutely, and do not change them. (Ironical laughter.) Oh! I am not speaking for myself. (Loud laughter.) I am only speaking on behalf of my country. But I would ask gentlemen to apply this test to the case of the French people. I must say that they have treated this matter with the most dignified self-restraint and consistency throughout. (Hear, hear.) I am bound to give my opinion, and I think the French, had they any other than friendly dispositions with regard to ourselves, might have made serious complaint of the manner of their treatment in having been invited to embark in this enterprise to an extent only short of the signature of the treaty, and then having found that we had receded from the ground and left the light-minded people standing in their original attitude while we have very considerably altered ours. Well, but, you will say, the question of our invading France is not a matter to be considered at all. (Hear, hear.) Therefore the other end of the Tunnel does not seriously enter into the question. The real question that we have before us

is the likelihood of the coming of that unhappy day—I agree it is a perfectly possible thing, I think and hope it is nothing more than a possible event, still it must be taken into consideration—when England will be invaded by France. I am very much behind the age in a great many respects; and I am very much behind those representatives of the age who sit on the opposite side of the House, for I have the habit of being guided in my anticipations of the future partly at least by considerations of the past. I know that is a mode of looking at a subject entirely dismissed from the consideration of the Conservatism now in fashion. It never much regarded the future; if it now discards the past, it has nothing to depend upon but the present, which flits away as I am speaking. Let us, however, for once glance at our history. For about 800 years, beginning from the Conquest, I want to know which country has oftenest invaded the other, and I will state this proposition, that the invasions of France by England have been at the least tenfold more than the invasions of the British Islands by France. Do you believe in a total revolution in the means of action between the two countries? There has, indeed, been a great change in one matter—that of population. Now, Sir, during the Revolutionary wars what happened? The great Napoleon—the most wonderful general and strategist of modern times—the man of whom Dr. Dollinger says that he raised war almost to the dignity and attitude of a fine art—addressed the whole of his resources and his thoughts to the invasion of England. Ireland was tried three times by the Directory, and three times there were miserable failures. Two other fleets had set out, one from Holland and one from Spain, and they had been destroyed by the power of British arms at sea. But Napoleon made it a study nightly and daily to devise and arrange the means of invading England, and he was obliged to recede from his design. Let me now touch another topic. It is worth while for those who have these portentous ideas of the power of France, and so small an idea of our means of defence, to consider the

relative population of the two countries. At the time when Napoleon prosecuted his schemes the population of Great Britain was about 10,000,000. The population of France was then 22,000,000. I will not count the population of Ireland, for at that period unfortunately, as at others, it added nothing to the military resources of this country for repelling invasion. Well, 10,000,000 of Englishmen constituted the sum of those whom Napoleon had to invade, and he could not manage it. (Cheers.) At the present moment this island contains far more than 30,000,000 of men not less strong, not less determined, not less energetic than the 10,000,000 of Napoleon's time, and they are close in mere numbers upon the population of France. Here, then, are two countries, and the question is whether one will invade the other by means of the Channel Tunnel. This is a country that has incessantly invaded France, and I am not sorry to say that, though we did it with marvellous success 500 years ago, we have not always been equally successful in recent years. Doubtless, there is the paramount case of 1815, with respect to which, if a case could be quoted on the other side parallel to the action of England and of Wellington, I would admit that there would be something more in the argument of the right hon. gentleman than I can allow that it contained as matters stand. I shall, however, be told that Napoleon had no steam. That appears to be a strong argument; but it is capable of being used both ways. (Hear, hear.) I believe that the invention of steam and the great revolution that we have seen in ship-building have in the aggregate enormously increased our means of defence as compared with the means possessed by France. I believe that our defensive power in times of crisis would develop itself with a rapidity, to an extent, and with an efficiency that would surpass all previous examples and would astonish the world. (Hear, hear.)

There is one other question that I should like to ask—What is the ground taken up by those gentlemen who point to our security as

the main matter which we have to consider? Do they mean on that ground to limit our communications with France? Do they mean, as in the time of Queen Anne, to "abate" our trade with France as being a thing mischievous in itself—a source of danger and insecurity? "No," says the right hon. gentleman opposite; "extend your communications to the uttermost; give every facility by which men and material can pass from one country to the other, but do not sanction the construction of this Tunnel." That is the plan of the right hon. gentleman. He proposes that the harbours of the country should be enlarged. He set no limit to the range of his philanthropy and enlightened views upon this matter. He has no apprehension upon this subject. Well, my apprehension is not great; but, if I am to conjure up any prospect of danger at all, I tell the right hon. gentleman deliberately that his plan of vast harbours and great ships, and of making the Channel a high road to be crossed with wonderful rapidity, presents ten times the danger that the prospects of the Tunnel ought to present to the most excitable mind. (Hear, hear.)

Now one word about the opinion of the military authorities. I am not going to speak of them with contempt; on the contrary, I must say that I have the deepest respect for the profession of the soldier, and especially for the function of the commander in the field, charged with the care of men and material in great masses, with the duty of making the most of the resources of his country, and with the enormously difficult task of bringing them to bear at particular points, at particular times, in particular circumstances, for the purposes of war. I deem that to be one of the highest and most extraordinary trials to which the human mind can be subjected, and I do not know any position in which the demand for energy and every great quality of manhood is equally tremendous and overpowering. Therefore, for Lord Wolseley, whom I believe to be a man extremely valuable to his country in the possible contingency of military danger and military effort, for him and the other military authorities I have the most profound respect; but

that respect is due to them chiefly in connection with operations of war and operations directly connected with war. In respect of operations not so directly connected with immediate war, I know that their judgment will always carry, and deserve to carry, much weight; but it is impossible to overlook the fact that military authorities are not infallible, and it often happens that the prescription which they recommend to you one day is disowned and reversed on another. We were told, for example, in 1860, that Lord Palmerston's fortifications would give us such security that we never need be alarmed again; but within the last few years we have had more poignant, startling, and costly alarms than have ever, perhaps, excited us before in times of peace, and those fortifications are regarded with the greatest indifference. If I am asked to believe that military authorities are infallible, if I am required to surrender my own poor judgment into their hands, I must quote the case of Alderney. If there is a creation on the face of the earth that is the creation of the military authorities, it is that which is now represented by the remnants and ruins, and shreds and tatters of the works at Alderney. (Hear, hear.) There are persons who say that all faults and deficiencies that are committed by the military authorities are due to the impertinent interference of civilians. Well, I had to do with the works at Alderney in the sense of yielding to the imperative demand of the military authorities of that day, and excellent and very distinguished men they were—Sir John Burgoyne, Lord Hardinge, and others. The first demand was, I think, for £150,000. They told us that if we would spend £150,000 at Alderney, Cherbourg would be sealed up so that no French fleet could issue from it. I agreed, accordingly, that that sum should be voted, but the matter did not end there. The sums demanded increased, until they almost reached, I think, a total of £2,000,000, and now there remain only the miserable fragments of that work, more like a monument of human folly than of human sense or skill. Although useless to us, perhaps the works will not be absolutely useless to any enemies

with whom we may at some future period have to deal. They may possibly extract some small portion of shelter and accommodation from those ruins. (Laughter and "Hear, hear.")

Again, Sir, everybody knows that, in the case of a great war, the one really appalling difficulty and danger for us is fewness of men, and not scantiness of any other resource whatever. When we were in military occupation of the Ionian Isles, they used, I think, to require a garrison approaching 6,000 men in time of peace; and in war, if we include the necessary reserves at home, they would have had to be debited probably with a force of 12,000 men on our military establishment. I do not believe that there is a man in this House who at this moment would say that it was desirable for us to be charged with the responsibility of reserving 12,000 men in a time of war for the purpose of retaining our hold upon Corfu, Cephalonia, Zante, and the other Ionian Isles; but at the time the military authorities were unanimous in strongly urging that to keep our hold upon the Ionian Islands was a great if not an essential element of the maintenance of our power in the Mediterranean. Something must, of course, be allowed for the professional zeal of men who set no limit to the sacrifices they are personally prepared to make when their country calls upon them for their services; but much must also be allowed for the fallibility of human judgment. It seems ludicrous for a person like myself to pretend to give an opinion upon the military dangers of the Channel Tunnel in opposition to the military authorities; but notwithstanding that, I must point out that it is not a safe thing for us to say, "We have military authorities who tell us this, that and the other," and to be thereupon satisfied, when we have before our eyes many authenticated cases in which the predictions and injunctions of the military authorities have been falsified, and when we know that what is taught and preached by them at the present day with respect to many points is the direct reverse of what was felt and taught and preached by their predecessors thirty years ago. (Hear, hear.) Under these circumstances, I trust the time

has arrived when we may consider the question in a state of comparative calm. In 1883 that was totally impossible. If I may use an old homely proverb, I would say that "Philip was then drunk." (Laughter.) I trust that he is now sober, and it is in the sobriety of Philip I place my whole reliance. (Hear, hear.) I hope I do not go beyond the limits of Parliamentary debate when I express my hearty congratulation to you, Sir, who now so worthily preside over our debates, on account of your having affixed your signature to the report of the minority of the committee which vindicated and approved the Tunnel. (Hear, hear.) My belief is that now we have arrived at a happy time when the gallant enterprise—for I must call it a gallant enterprise, arduous and difficult as it is—of my hon. friend the member for Hythe has some chance of receiving the fair judgment and opinion of the nation. It may have against it that factitious opinion which sometimes passes for a moment as the opinion of the nation, which has been too strong on this point, as I admit it was too strong for me, at a former period; but now I trust it is so far reduced, weakened, and brought within moderate bounds that there is some chance for common sense, and for that spirit of enterprise, which has been at all times among the noblest characteristics of this country. (Cheers.)